FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Nations National Child Benefit Reinvestment (NCBR) initiative is a part of the National Child Benefit (NCB) initiative introduced in 1998 by the federal, provincial[1], and territorial governments. Three objectives are set out for the initiative: 1) to help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty, 2) to promote attachment to the workforce by ensuring that families will be better off as a result of working, and 3) to reduce overlap and duplication by harmonizing program objectives and benefits and simplifying administration. The role of the federal government is to provide financial benefits directly to low-income families with children through the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and the NCB Supplement (NCBS), while the provinces, territories, and First Nations reinvest "savings" made possible by the initiative in programs and services that address the needs of low-income families with children.

The Treasury Board Secretariat requires that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) prepare and distribute annual reports on the progress being made by First Nations in achieving the NCB goals. This sixth annual report provides background information on the First Nations NCBR initiative, sets out examples of programs and services that are supported by NCB reinvestment funding, furnishes expenditure and impact data, and reviews the achievements of First Nations up to and including fiscal year 2004-2005. The main sources of information for the report are project administrators, INAC records, the "National Child Benefit Progress Report: 2004," and the "Review of Activities for the First Nations National Child Benefit Reinvestment Initiative" (March 2005).

Since the introduction of the initiative, the number of projects enabled by reinvestment funding and the number of beneficiaries of those projects have risen consistently. First Nations reinvestments in programs and services for low-income parents and their children amounted to more than $55 million in 2004-2005; since the inception of NCBR in 1998-1999, they have reinvested over $355 million in activities directed to overcoming poverty in their communities. The number of families and children who benefited from these programs and services in 2004-2005 were approximately 160,000 and 360,000 respectively. The use of reinvestment funds is expected to continue to grow as First Nations build on and share their experiences and knowledge about this alternative funding mechanism.

The benefits that the system has for First Nations communities are summed up as follows:

1) NCBR funds many services that would otherwise not be available to low-income parents and children. The services support fuller participation in economic, social, and cultural activities.

2) The flexible nature of NCBR allows First Nations to identify and respond to their own priorities and needs in addressing child poverty.

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[1] The Government of Québec agrees with the basic principles of the NCB, but did not take part in NCB development because it controls income support for the children of the province. Québec's family policy is consistent with that of the NCB.

3) The initiative reinforces the thrust of First Nations organizations and the Government of Canada to develop self-governing, self-determining, and self-reliant First Nations.

4) Creating and managing NCBR projects enables local officials and administrators to acquire transferable knowledge and skills.

5) A sense of pride and individual self-esteem has been fostered by activities that raise awareness of community social, economic, and cultural traditions and values.

The success of the NCB stands as an example of the progress that is being made by the Government of Canada and First Nations in their shared effort to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples.

THE NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT: REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

The federal, provincial, and territorial Ministers of Social Services came to common agreement in 1998 that governments, including First Nations, should work together to ensure that all Canadian children have a good start in life and that families with children are well-equipped to provide adequate care and nurturing for their children. As a result, the NCB was brought into being to assist low-income families and their children by providing financial benefits and by improving services and supports for those families. Underlying the initiative was the principle that the most effective long-term approach to reducing poverty was to help low-income families participate successfully in the labour force.

The goals of the initiative were articulated in the 1998 Speech from the Throne as:

1. Preventing and reducing the depth of child poverty.

2. Promoting the attachment of families to the work force.

3. Reducing overlap and duplication among programs serving children and families.

The federal government contributes to the initiative through the base benefit, the CCTB and the NCBS. Both are paid monthly to parents who are income-tested using information contained in their income tax returns. Benefits are paid regardless of whether the parents are working or receiving social assistance.

The CCTB and the NCBS have been established under the Income Tax Act (Section 122.6) as a continuing initiative of the Government of Canada.

Several provinces/territories have also enacted legislation pertaining to their respective NCB-related initiatives.

The coordinated approach to delivering child benefits to low-income families with children has enabled provinces, territories, and First Nations to adapt and supplement their income assistance and other social service programs to meet the needs of low-income families with children more effectively. The flexibility of the initiative frees up funds to enhance existing programs and to introduce new programs and services designed to meet the specific needs of families within their jurisdictions while fulfilling the objectives of the national initiative. In addition, program and service design has significantly benefited from shared knowledge and experience across the many jurisdictions.

Programs and services of the provinces and territories are organized into six categories:

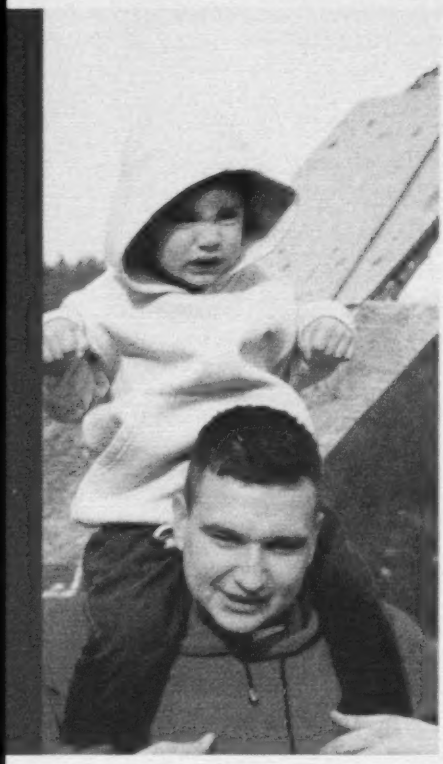
- Child/Day Care Initiatives
- Child Benefits and Earned Income Supplements
- Early Childhood Services and Children-at-Risk Services
- Supplementary Health Benefits
- Youth Initiatives
- Other NCB Programs, Benefits, and Services

A study on the effects of the NCB initiative, The Evaluation of the National Child Benefit Initiative: Synthesis Report, which was released on June 6, 2005, has collected evidence from a number of studies which indicate that the initiative has had positive impacts on low-income families with children. The report points out that the number of low-income families has been reduced and that the financial situation of the families has improved: for most families employment has become more financially attractive than income assistance dependency. Moreover, the initiative has made possible a greater degree of federal/provincial/territorial co-ordination and integration in the delivery of benefits to children in low-income families.

THE FIRST NATIONS NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE

It is the view of the federal government that First Nations people should benefit like other Canadians from national social, health, and related programs. To this end, the federal government has worked in harmony with First Nations governments to establish the First Nations NCBR initiative as the on-reserve counterpart to provincial and territorial initiatives. In the 2006 budget speech, the Government of Canada recognized First Nations' contributions to the strength of the country, and at the same time acknowledge that they continue to face special challenges. It committed to support Aboriginal communities in addressing their particular needs, including socio-economic conditions for Aboriginal women, children, and families.

Services and benefits to children and families of First Nations communities are comparable to those available to people living in non-reserve areas, and are similarly intended to ensure that First Nations children have maximum opportunity to develop fully their potential as healthy, active, and contributing members of their communities. The First Nations initiative has the same objectives as those of other jurisdictions.



The initiative works to reduce the effects of poverty for people in First Nations communities by 1) directing income benefits to eligible low-income families with children and 2) reinvesting program funds in services that are specifically designed to promote the independence and self-sufficiency of low-income families and their children.

Income Benefits

Like other Canadians, low-income families in First Nations communities receive financial assistance to help them with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age through the CCTB base benefit and the NCBS. The monthly entitlement is similarly based on a family' s net income and the number and ages of their children. The family must file an application form as well as an income tax return to receive benefits as the Canada Revenue Agency needs both to calculate the amount payable.

The benefits for low-income families are kept in line with increases in the cost of living: the NCBS has been increased annually since its beginning, and, since January 2000, both the CCTB and NCBS have been fully indexed; moreover, the maximum allowable income levels have been raised. As of July 2006, the maximum annual payments (base benefit and supplement) will be $3,200 for a first child, plus $2,975 for a second child, and $2,980 for a third and each subsequent child. (The Alberta government has chosen to vary the amount of basic benefit that Alberta residents get.) The CCTB family net income threshold is $36,378, with a reduction in the NCBS payable when family net income is greater than $20,435.

The Child Disability Benefit is payable to families with a child who has an eligible disability. The benefit, which is based on family net income, provides up to a maximum of $2,300 annually; the amount of payment starts being reduced when family net income is more than $36,378 per year.

In the case of a child who has been placed in the care of a First Nations Child and Family Services agency, or other agency, in accordance with provincial/territorial legislation, a Children' s Special Allowance is paid to the agency in lieu of the CCTB and the NCBS. The agency applies directly to Canada Revenue Agency for the allowance when the child is taken into care. The person who had custody of the child before admission into care stops receiving CCTB and NCBS payments once the agency application is approved.

For persons receiving income assistance, the CCTB and NCBS may affect the amount of income assistance payments. Several provinces regard the combined payments to be unearned income, and either deduct the payments in calculating the income assistance entitlement of applicants, or reduce the basic income assistance benefit schedules by amounts up to or equal to the maximum NCBS payments. In no case, however, do these adjustments result in a reduction in a family's total income.

Consistent with its objective of promoting the attachment of families to the work force, benefits continue to be payable to parents who leave income assistance for employment but whose income falls below an established threshold.

In addition to the CCTB and the NCBS, low-income families in some jurisdictions may qualify to receive a supplement. Current provincial/territorial programs are:

- Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit
- Nova Scotia Child Benefit
- New Brunswick Child Tax Benefit
- Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families
- Manitoba Child Related Income Support Program
- Saskatchewan Child Benefit
- Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit
- BC Family Bonus
- Yukon Child Benefit

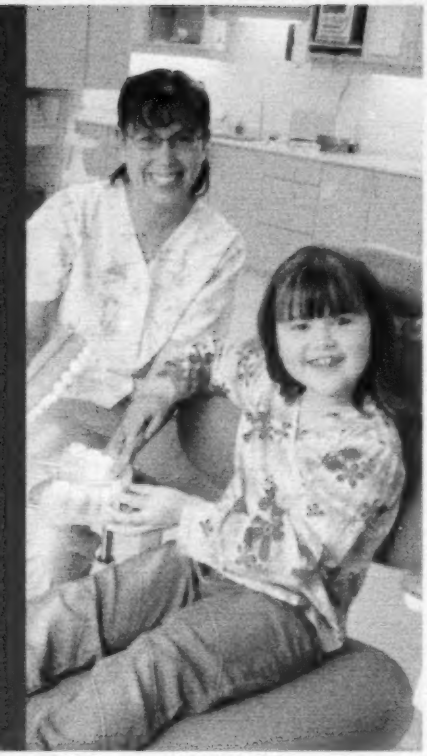
A separate application is not required for these benefits, as CRA uses the information from the CCTB application to determine eligibility and entitlement under these programs.

National Child Benefit Reinvestments

As noted above, some provinces and territories have reduced their income assistance payments to families with children in amounts up to or equal to the NCBS payments received by the families. (Provincial and territorial approaches to replacing income assistance benefits to children are described in Appendix A.) The savings accruing to provinces and territories due to the adjustments provide the financial means for enriching existing services or creating new services aimed at achieving the objectives of the initiative.

First Nations administer income assistance in their communities following the policies and benefit schedules of their provincial or territorial counterparts. When a province or territory makes changes that reduce income assistance payments to parents in receipt of child benefits, First Nations will adopt similar measures. For the recipients, the amount of their CCTB and NCBS is at least equal to the reduced income assistance, so total family income does not decrease. The savings in income assistance expenditures resulting from the reduced payments are available to First Nations administering authorities for reinvestment in programs and services that will help prevent or alleviate child poverty.

The actual amount of NCBR funds is calculated on a regional basis, according to the procedures and amounts by which provincial and territorial governments adjust their income assistance rates because of the NCBS. When a province or territory supplements the federal payment with additional funding (commonly referred to as the Additional Investment Envelope), INAC commits to reimburse the portion which reaches low-income families on reserve. For example, INAC reimburses Saskatchewan and Yukon for integrated payments to low income families with children who ordinarily reside in First Nations communities.



An important feature of the NCBR funding mechanism is that it gives First Nations the flexibility to prioritize their reinvestments according to the unique needs and cultural values of their own communities. Although the operation of the NCBR in each region closely follows off-reserve models, First Nations projects have tended to cover a wider range of service areas than those of the provinces and territories. In some cases, the reinvestment funds available to smaller communities may not be large, but First Nations are able to increase their impact by linking them with other resources, such as day-care funding, general band revenue, or employment-creation funding. Some other agencies with which First Nations have established funding partnerships include Head Start, Brighter Futures, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Canada Manpower, Pathways, and Training Employment Skills Initiative.

Besides lessening child poverty, the management of NCBR-funded projects benefits First Nations governments and agencies by promoting and developing local initiative and decision-making. Community policy-development and service-delivery capabilities are strengthened through the planning, design, operation, monitoring, and evaluation activities involved in community-based First Nations NCBR projects.

NCBR Management and Reporting

A Proposal Development and Reporting Guide was developed by INAC in collaboration with First Nation NCBR project administrators during 2003-2004 to assist in the process of approval of reinvestment strategies. This guide sets out:

1) The steps involved in planning and processing a proposal, including accessing funding, roles and responsibilities of staff, writing the proposal, a proposal checklist, and submitting the proposal. A proposal template is included in the guide.

2) Reporting requirements, including time frames for reporting and information required for the First Nations NCB Annual Report on Reinvestment.

3) Background information on the NCBR initiative.

An electronic version of the Guide is available on INAC's NCBR website.

The NCBR management framework requires that local reinvestment initiatives be consistent with the federal/provincial/territorial objectives for the program, i.e, that they strengthen communities and families in order to reduce child poverty. INAC is obliged to ensure that all required accountability provisions are included in the funding agreements so that transferred funds will yield proper value.

An important part of the program management process is ongoing monitoring, which yields current information on activities and outputs, as does feedback from First Nations on innovations, challenges, and other aspects of reinvestment programs.

The inputs and results of NCBR activities are reported on at all levels. First Nations recipients are required to report to INAC on activities and results related to programs generated by their incremental NCBR funding. These annual reports list project titles, along with short descriptions outlining the purpose, activities, schedule, and resources used for each project during the fiscal year. Descriptions of project outcomes and accomplishments for the year, including the number of clients assisted, are also listed. The First Nations reports are used as the basis for a yearly summary report on reinvestment activities from the regions to Headquarters. The regional reports, in turn, are used for INAC' s input to the annual federal/provincial/territorial report to Ministers Responsible for Social Services. As well, INAC produces its own annual progress report to First Nations, regions, provincial/territorial governments, and the general public which describes the successes of First Nations in creating and delivering services to low-income families and their children in their communities.

Reinvestment Funding

Significant financial resources are made available under the NCBR initiative for projects that will yield short and long-term social, health, and economic pay-offs for First Nations communities. The following table indicates the scale of the initiative: the actual reinvestments by First Nations are set out for each year from 1998-1999 to 2004-2005. It is noteworthy that total expenditures to reduce child poverty from 1998-1999 to 2004-2005 is more than one-third of a billion dollars (as per Table 1: $355.9 million).

TABLE 1: Actual First Nations NCBR Expenditures by Year and Region for the Years 1998-1999 to 2004-2005 ($ 000 's)

Region	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
Atlantic[1]	1,000	2,100	3,000	1,548.6	991.4	757.1	3,908.3	13,305.4
Québec	6,824.2	8,539.5	8,539.5	8,539.5	8,160.7	6,202	3,314.6	50,120
Ontario	2,700	3,500	5,217.5	7,355.3	8,118.1	7,343.8	8,856	43,090.7
Manitoba[2]	4,300	8,400	7,785.6	5,322.1	3,209.1	1,763.9	0	30,780.7
Sask.	4,400	8,600	11,440.8	15,391.7	16,851.4	18,815.5	19,763.2	95,262.6
Alberta	1,700	7,000	9,667.2	8,566.1	9,756.7	10,173.9	9,422.7	56,286.6
B.C.	2,300	3,470	4,324	4,174.1	5,972.9	6,268.5	6,918.8	33,428.3
Yukon	200	300	264.1	341.1	488.5	438.5	564.5	2,596.7
Sub Total	**23,424.2**	**41,909.5**	**50,238.7**	**51,238.5**	**53,548.8**	**51,763.2**	**52,748.1**	**324,871**
YK	0	240	240	240	240	240	240	1,440
Sask	6,700	8,100	3,799.2	5,522.9	2,198.8	1,173.8	2,139	29,633.7
Total NCB	**30,124.2**	**50,249.5**	**54,277.9**	**57,001.4**	**55,987.6**	**53,177**	**55,127.1**	**355,944.7**

[1] NCB activities for the Atlantic region only include First Nations in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. New Brunswick has no recovery mechanism, therefore has no NCB reinvestment dollars. Newfoundland has only one First Nation that does not report to INAC for these activities.

[2] As of January 2004, the Province of Manitoba has opted to pay all children's benefits directly to families. Reinvestment funds are no longer available.

The following table shows the amounts of NCBR funds distributed, reported, and unreported for the Year 2004-2005 for each region of INAC.

TABLE 2: Reinvestment Funds Allocated vs Funds Reported[1] and Unreported for the Year 2004-2005 ($ 000' s)

Region	Funds Distributed	Funds Reported	Funds Unreported
Atlantic[2]	0	3,908.3	0
Québec	3,474.5	3,314.6	159.9
Ontario	9,311.3	8,856	455.3
Manitoba	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saskatchewan	17,464.7	19,763.2	0
Alberta	7,613.8	9,422.7	0
British Columbia	6,948.3	6,918.8	29.5
Yukon	604.6	564.5	40.1
Total	**45,417.2**	**52,748.1**	**684.8**

USE OF REINVESTMENT FUNDS

First Nations NCBR Activity Areas

The NCB funding mechanism affords First Nations communities the flexibility to direct reinvestments to meet their self-determined priorities and needs, provided they support the objectives of the First Nations NCBR initiative.

First Nations base their reinvestment decisions on consultations with their people, or include such consultations as part of the overall redesign of their income support programs. The approach taken by communities is to prioritize the service needs, identify services that appear to be under-supplied relative to those needs, assess developmental possibilities in terms of available funding and staffing resources, and create the service structures that will deliver the needed benefits to the targeted population.

The programs funded under NCBR vary from First Nation to First Nation, and they cover a wide range of services, according to needs and preferences as determined by the communities themselves.

[1] These figures are a snapshot in time and are based on reports submitted by First Nations to regional INAC offices as of July 15. The data are summarized by regional offices and submitted to INAC Headquarters via the Transfer Payment Management System. Any reports that have been submitted after that date may not be reflected in the series of tables contained within this report. Also, distribution and reporting on results and expenditures are done in a different way for First Nations under self-government agreements, and multi-year agreements signed before 1998 which were subsequently rolled over.

[2] NCB activities for the Atlantic region only includes First Nations in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The First Nations initiative categorizes projects under five activity areas, as follows:

Childcare: Programs that enhance child care facilities to enable more low-income families to access space for their children. The emphasis may be on accommodating children of working parents or parents who are participating in training projects. Another approach is to use funds to reduce the share of child-care costs that parents in training or working must pay for the care of their children in the facilities (although no direct subsidies may be given to parents).

Child Nutrition: This includes programs to improve the health and well-being of children by giving them breakfast, lunch, or snacks in school; by educating parents about the nutritional needs of children and meal preparation; or by delivering food hampers to homes of low-income families.

Support to Parents: These are programs designed to equip and support parents in giving their children a sound start in life, for example, drop-in centres for parents or training in parenting skills.

Home-to-Work Transition: Programs that are directed at improving the prospects of parents and youth for employment, e.g., employment and skills development, summer work projects for youth.

Cultural Enrichment: In this category are projects such as the teaching of traditional culture (e.g., language, art, music, storytelling), support projects for youth, celebrations, peer support groups, family and community supports (such as life skills), financial management training, and other group activities that bring together community elders, children, and youth.

Number of Projects

From the beginning, First Nations in all regions of the country have responded positively to the initiative, using reinvestment funds to operate a large number of projects aimed at lessening the extent of child poverty in their communities. The following table shows the number of projects that have been created and implemented by First Nations in each region over a four-year period. In the last reported year, 2004-2005, the number of projects averaged well over two for every First Nation in the country, with the regional numbers ranging from ten in Yukon Region to 873 in BC Region.

TABLE 3: Number of NCBR Projects by Region for the Years 2001-2002 to 2004-2005

Region	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Atlantic	9	15	7	18
Québec	427	78	64	99
Ontario	140	78	52	202
Manitoba	80	248	99	0
Saskatchewan	174	81	72	180
Alberta	148	163	157	187
British Columbia	99	642	959	873
Yukon	11	29	13	10
Total	1,088	1,334	1,423	1,569

NCBR by Activity Area

The following table shows the amounts and percentages of NCBR funds invested in each of the Activity Areas, by region, in the year 2004-2005.

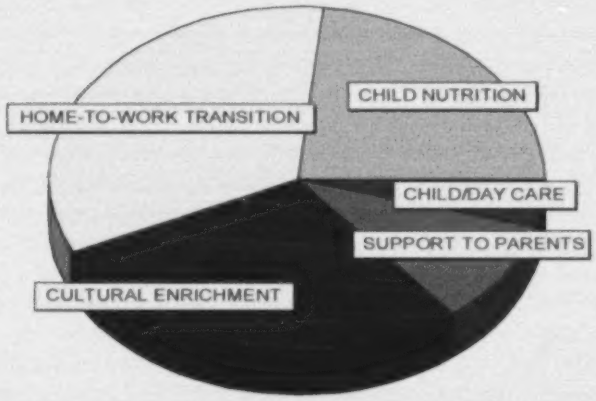
TABLE 4: Reinvestment Funds Reported by Region and Activity Area for the Year 2004-2005 (in $ 000's and as Percentages of Total)

Region	Child/DayCare	Child Nutrition	Support to Parents	Home-to-Work Transition	Cultural Enrichment	Total
Atlantic	55.2	1,105.0	220.1	622.4	1,905.6	3,908.3
	1.4 %	28.3 %	5.6 %	15.9 %	48.8 %	100 %
Québec	8.8	793.2	0.0	1,696.3	816.3	3,314.6
	0.3 %	23.9 %	0.0 %	51.2 %	24.6 %	100 %
Ontario	138.5	3,562.9	1,239.8	254.4	3,660.5	8,856.1
	1.6 %	40.2 %	14.0 %	2.9 %	41.3 %	100 %
Saskatchewan	436.4	3,483.7	835.1	10,167.9	4,840.1	19,763.2
	2.2 %	17.6 %	4.2 %	51.5 %	24.5 %	100 %
Alberta	603.7	1,782.1	1,768.6	3,269.0	1,999.3	9,422.7
	6.4 %	18.9 %	18.8 %	34.7 %	21.2 %	100 %
B.C.	744.8	1,732.3	931.3	1,498.7	2,011.8	6,918.9
	10.8 %	25.0 %	13.5 %	21.6 %	29.1 %	100 %
Yukon	336.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	228.5	564.5
	59.5%	0.0 %	0.0 %	0.0 %	40.5 %	100 %
Total[1]	2,323.4	12,459.2	4,994.9	17,508.7	15,462.1	52,748.3
	4.4 %	23.6 %	9.5 %	33.2 %	29.3 %	100 %

[1] These figures are a snapshot in time and are based on reports submitted by First Nations to regional INAC offices as of July 15. The data are summarized by regional offices and submitted to INAC Headquarters via the Transfer Payment Management System. Any reports that have been submitted after that date may not be reflected in the series of tables contained within this report. Also, distribution and reporting on results and expenditures are done in a different way for First Nations under self-government agreements, and multi-year agreements signed before 1998 which were subsequently rolled over.

The following chart illustrates the relative amounts of NCBR expenditures for the five Activity Areas in 2004-2005.

Reinvestments by Activity Area for 2004-2005



The percentages and dollar amounts shown in Table 4, and illustrated in the chart, indicate that the Activity Areas into which First Nations tend to direct most reinvestment funding are Home-to-Work Transition and Cultural Enrichment, with Child Nutrition next, and Support to Parents and Child/ Day Care following. There is significant variation among the regions, however: for example, Saskatchewan Region invests 51.5 percent of funds in Home-to-Work Transition, while Atlantic Region puts only 15.9 percent of available funds into this Activity Area. Another example: Yukon Region invests over one-half (59.5 percent) of its funds in Child/Day Care, while Ontario invests 1.6 percent in that area. In Atlantic Region, First Nations put 48.8 percent of funds into cultural enrichment, against the national average of only 29.3 percent.

There is also significant variation from year to year as to where NCBR funds are directed. It may be noted in the following table that over a five-year period the value of Support to Parents projects increased by about one-third, while there was an almost four-fold increase in spending on Child/Day Care and Home-to-Work Transition projects.

TABLE 5: Actual NCBR Expenditures Reported by Activity Area for the Years 2000-2001 to 2004-2005 ($ 000' s)

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Child/Day Care	617.0	813.7	984.2	865.8	2,323.4
Child Nutrition	5,002.7	6,971.8	7,041.6	5,111.3	12,459.1
Support to Parents	3,463.2	1,288.9	947.3	1,750.0	4,994.8
Home-to-Work Transition	5,078.5	5,738.5	7,900.2	8,886.0	17,508.7
Cultural Enrichment	8,821.5	19,219.4	17,774.9	12,491.3	15,462.1
Total	**22,982.9**	**34,032.3**	**34,648.2**	**29,104.4**	**52,748.1**

Impacts of First Nations NCB Reinvestments

Reinvestment funding has enabled First Nations to provide services (which would otherwise be largely unavailable) to a great number of low-income families and children in their communities. The extent to which these First Nations interventions have reached their intended beneficiaries may be seen in the following table:

TABLE 6: Number of Families and Children Benefiting[1] from NCBR Projects and On-Reserve Registered Indian Population Aged 0-19 Years, by Region for the Year 2004-2005

Region	Number of Families	Number of Children	Child Population On-Reserve
Atlantic	1,281	2,608	7,760
Québec	4,994	10,583	18,233
Ontario	22,960	52,429	30,309
Saskatchewan	85,533	209,520	28,999
Alberta	11,910	23,826	29,571
British Columbia	32,722	59,088	21,462
Yukon	363	1,266	1,204
Total	**159,763**	**359,320**	**137,538**

The numbers of families and children served according to Activity Area and region is indicated by the following table, which also shows the number of regional projects.

TABLE 7: Numbers of Reinvestment Projects and Families and Children Benefiting[2] from NCBR Programs by Activity Area and by Region for the

Activity Area	Number of Projects	Number of Families	Number of Children
Child/Day Care	152	13,818	28,335
Child Nutrition	417	46,428	97,675
Support to Parents	236	19,998	40,675
Home-to-Work Transition	289	32,141	80,305
Cultural Enrichment	475	47,378	112,154
National Total	**1,569**	**159,763**	**359,320**

[1] Because some families and children received more than one community service, the numbers of beneficiaries are double counted.

[2] Because some families and children received more than one community service, the numbers of beneficiaries are double counted.

As the following table indicates, the total numbers of families and children assisted by First Nations NCBR initiatives has increased very significantly each year over the five-year period ending March 31, 2005:

TABLE 8: Numbers of Families and Children Benefiting[1] from NCB Projects in the Years 2000-2001 to 2004-2005, by Region

Region	2000-2001		2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Fam' s	Chldn	Fam' s	Chldn	Fam' s	Chldn	Fam' s	Chldn	Fam' s	Chldn
Atlantic	593	963	683	1,086	574	681	431	776	1,281	2,608
Québec	14,214	20,433	4,379	9,610	3,945	8,720	2,971	5,984	4,994	10,583
Ontario	2,998	6,101	4,500	9,713	7,958	16,240	2,945	7,768	22,960	52,429
Manitoba	6,197	14,796	6,662	16,444	6,752	14,301	2,936	7,016	0	0
Sask.	1,294	3,599	3,117	9,598	7,404	18,803	33,363	76,474	85,533	209,520
Alberta	3,396	8,354	8,218	22,273	5,998	15,054	9,798	21,460	11,910	23,826
B.C.	17,046	28,907	15,125	26,088	25,238	43,409	40,693	74,586	32,722	59,088
Yukon	165	253	250	506	98	526	479	366	363	1,266
Total	**45,903**	**83,406**	**42,934**	**95,318**	**57,967**	**117,734**	**93,616**	**194,430**	**159,763**	**359,320**

REVIEW OF FIRST NATIONS NCBR ACTIVITIES

In 2005 INAC carried out a review of NCBR activities, which was aimed at identifying program activities and short-term or immediate outcomes, and to obtain practical information about the operation of the initiative in First Nations communities that would support program decision-making.

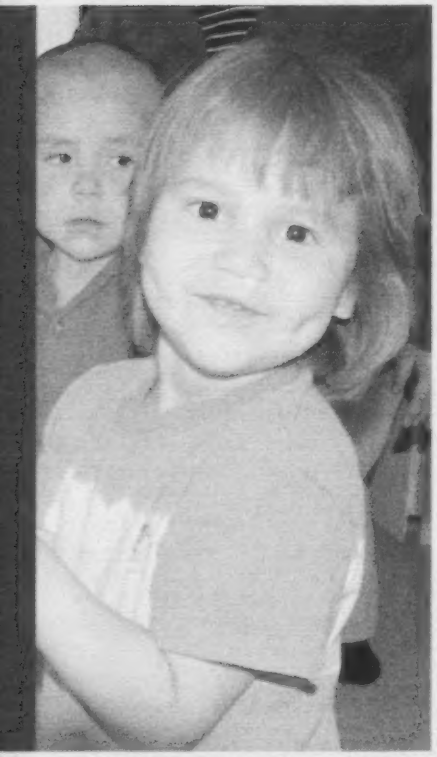
Forty interviews with project administrators were planned, with only three not responding, a 93% response rate. Respondents were from Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, BC, and Yukon. Of the 37 interviews, 36 were by telephone and one in-person, with an average duration of 55 minutes. The study took in a cross-section of large and small, rural/remote and urban communities, with NCBR budgets ranging from $9,000 to more than $1,000,000. The respondents, who had worked with NCBR initiatives for an average of five years, were very willing to participate and share information.

Findings of Study

Following is a summary of some of the key findings of the evaluative study:

- Almost all communities have an informal consultative process in place to identify priorities for projects, including working with a team of Band staff on project identification and implementation, soliciting input from Band council and related departments, and encouraging feedback from community members and project participants.

[1] Because some families and children received more than one community service, the numbers of beneficiaries are double counted.



- At all levels there is awareness and strong community support for the NCBR initiative. It was suggested that information sheets on NCBR activities be made available, geared to different levels of involvement, e.g., Chief and Council, administrators, income assistance clients, or the general public.

- Respondents take an informal approach to project review and evaluation, obtaining verbal feedback from project managers and participants.

- Respondents are satisfied that projects are successful and achieving the expected results. Results are primarily measured by gathering statistics on the numbers of people served. Other indicators include verbal feedback from those involved in implementation of projects.

- Where funding is sufficient, communities distribute resources fairly evenly to the three target groups: children, youth, and parents. Reducing child poverty is the overall priority for all communities.

- Projects geared to children and youth are a priority for virtually all communities.

- Most communities combine NCBR funding with resources from other programs in order to serve a greater number of community members and maximize the impact of resources.

- It was thought that NCBR objectives and parameters are flexible enough to facilitate design of projects that meet community needs.

FIRST NATIONS NCBR CONFERENCE

In response to many calls from First Nations NCBR administrators for opportunities to share and exchange information on NCBR management, INAC headquarters and Alberta Region organized a national gathering that took place in Edmonton, Alberta, on November 15 to 17, 2005. The goals for the conference were to:

1. Share and exchange information on reinvestment success stories.

2. Discuss methods for improving communication products to facilitate implementation of NCBR.

3. Seek input from participants for a planned NCBR evaluation.

4. Provide opportunities for administrators to network with colleagues from across the country.

5. Clarify and discuss a variety of NCBR operational issues.

The hosts of the conference, the Paul First Nation, offered advice and support to delegates, provided guidance in identifying an elder to assist with the conference, and coordinated the organization of conference resources.

Some First Nations representatives brought materials and sample resources as a way of sharing information on their successful NCBR projects. These resources included brochures, photos, and promotional materials on projects, as well as local crafts. Time was available throughout the conference for delegates to visit the resource tables and learn more about projects in other communities.

Delegates from each region gave a presentation on a success story from their community, followed by a question-and-answer period. In total, there were presentations by 20 First Nations communities. The presentations were video-taped in order to later make a DVD of the presentations to distribute to all conference delegates. As well, highlights of the presentations will be included in video clips to be posted on INAC' s NCBR website.

Descriptions of some of the NCBR projects presented at the conference (one example by each of the activity areas) may be found in Appendix B.

An overview of NCBR program activities over the last year was provided, including:

- NCBR Progress Report for the Year Ending March 31, 2004
- The NCBR National Manual
- Departmental NCBR website
- NCBR Project Plan Guidelines
- NCBR calendar
- Review of NCBR activities in First Nations communities

Copies of the resources presented were made available to delegates.

INAC is committed to improving communication products to assist administrators in their implementation of NCBR projects. To that end, thirty delegates completed a communication survey to provide their opinions on existing communication products and to offer suggestions on how to improve the products and the sharing of ideas. The suggestions on ways to improve communications included holding workshops/conferences, sending reports on successes by mail, e-mail, and fax, and developing a newsletter. Delegates also felt that INAC could do more to promote and distribute the communication products and offered suggestions on how this could be accomplished.

An overview of plans for the upcoming summative evaluation of NCBR was provided, pointing out that the role of a summative evaluation is to demonstrate results, as well as help build a case for investment, identify improvements or changes needed, identify alternative ways of doing things, and guide future policy direction.

After the presentation, delegates worked in small groups to answer questions that were intended to bring out their views on the issues and information they felt should be considered as part of the evaluation process. Delegates welcomed the opportunity to provide their input and actively participated in the discussion groups. They felt strongly their input must be considered in the evaluation planning process and that First Nations governments and NCBR administrators must be involved in the implementation of the evaluation. The departmental delegates said this feedback was extremely useful as a guide in developing the evaluation planning process.

At the conclusion of the conference, the consensus was that the goals of the conference had been met in all respects, particularly in providing a unique opportunity to share information on activities and to network with colleagues from across the country. Many commented that the information obtained at the conference had provided them with ideas for future NCBR projects.

CONCLUSION

First Nations have achieved many successes by capitalizing on NCBR resources to establish programs that would otherwise not be available to low-income families with children in their communities. The goals of reducing the extent of child poverty and giving low-income parents opportunities to participate more fully in the work force and in the life of the community are being met as a result of the efforts and leadership of First Nations governments, organizations, and individuals since the inception of the initiative in 1998.

The adaptability of NCBR offers First Nations wide-ranging opportunities to prioritize, develop, and deliver services specifically designed to help families with limited income. As long as funded projects and services are in line with NCB objectives, First Nations are able to direct their efforts to particular activities based on their own needs. It is largely due to the scope and flexibility of the NCBR that First Nations have been able to successfully use reinvestment funds for many different kinds of projects and services, and with increasing effectiveness each year.

The system may be seen to have the following benefits for communities:

1) Funding provides services that can improve the conditions of life, both in the present and future, for low-income families and their children. These services make it possible for them to contribute more fully to community economic, social, and cultural activities.

2) The flexible nature of the initiative allows First Nations to respond to their specific community priorities and needs while addressing child poverty and other social ills.

3) The initiative reinforces the thrust of First Nations organizations and the Government of Canada to develop self-governing, self-determining, and self-reliant communities.

4) By establishing and operating NCBR-funded projects, local officials and administrators develop managerial knowledge and skills that are transferable to other tasks and undertakings, for the betterment of their communities.

5) A sense of cultural pride and individual self-esteem has been fostered by Cultural Enrichment activities like raising awareness of community social, economic, and cultural traditions and values.

First Nations may be expected to build on the achievements to date and to share their experiences and knowledge about this unique means for funding social, health, and related services in their communities.

The Government of Canada continues to work in partnership with First Nations to achieve the shared goal of improving the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples. The benefits gained by low-income parents and their children in First Nations communities across the country through the NCBR are a significant result of this common effort.

APPENDIX A

PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO NCB

Some provinces (New Brunswick, Manitoba) allow the NCBS to be paid directly to recipients without affecting the income assistance entitlement of children. Most provinces and territories, however, adjust income assistance entitlements to take account of NCBS payments. Three distinct approaches for replacing income assistance benefits for children have evolved since the NCB began in 1998. These are as follows:

1. Social Assistance Offset Approach: Under this approach, provinces and territories either treat the NCBS as an unearned income charge against social assistance or reduce their social assistance rates for children. In the case of income offset, social assistance recipients have the amount of the NCBS they receive deducted from their social assistance entitlement. This approach is used in Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. In the case of rate reduction, the social assistance rate is reduced by the maximum NCBS. Alberta uses this approach. For First Nations, there is no practical difference between the income offset and rate reduction models. This is because First Nations families living on reserve are entitled to collect the full amount of the NCBS because their income is non-taxable. Families that stop receiving social assistance continue receiving the NCBS. Reinvestment funds under this approach are funds that provinces and territories save when entitlements of recipients are reduced.

2. Integrated Child Benefit Approach with Adjustment: Some provinces or territories have chosen to restructure their social assistance system to pay children' s benefits through a separate income-tested child benefit program that is integrated with the CCTB program. Under this approach, increases in the NCBS are offset in full or in part against the provincial child benefit. The savings from this offset become the province' s reinvestment funds. Saskatchewan and British Columbia have adopted this approach.

3. Integrated Child Benefit Approach without Adjustment: Some provinces and territories have restructured their social assistance system to provide children' s benefits through a separate income-tested program. In these cases, however, there was no offset of the NCBS against child benefits. In the provinces and territories that have implemented this type of approach, the amount of reinvestment funds is set to the funds that were being used for child benefits under the social assistance system at the time the system was restructured. The amount of reinvestment funds is set at that time and remains the same for following years. Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Quebec have adopted this approach.

APPENDIX B

FIRST NATIONS NCBR: SUCCESS STORIES

Example of Projects Presented at the November 15-17, 2005 NCBR Conference

Childcare

Presenter: Chapel Island First Nation, NS
Project: Child Care Project

The community identified a need to address the gap in child care spaces for single parents. Where a single parent wanted to develop or enhance education or employment opportunities, the barrier to obtaining child care needed to be removed. Free child care is provided for single parents in situations where they are enhancing their parenting skills or working toward gaining employment.

Child Nutrition

Presenter: Tsawwassen First Nation, BC
Project: Healthy Habits

The project provides a lunch program, three days per week to children in elementary and high school. In addition, there is a Community Kitchen twice a month and the First Nation is now in the planning stages of developing a Community Garden and an on-reserve food bank that will be led by the Social Development Worker and Home and Community Care nurse. Among participants are income assistance and low-income families, including children in elementary and high school.

Positive verbal feedback has been received from families, as well as from children who look forward to their lunches every week. Almost every high school student receives a nutritious, balanced lunch from the project. The lunches are based on the four food groups. Parents and children are able to choose from a selection of granola, sandwiches, bagels, cheese, yogurt, pudding, fruit, vegetables, juice, and water.

The Community Kitchen is staffed by volunteers, who meet to discuss menu planning and go over bargain shopping. In the summer of 2005, the Community Kitchen members had several outings for the families to harvest strawberries, blueberries, etc. After a picnic lunch it was off to the kitchen where the fruit was then turned into pies and jam. Cultural events included arts and crafts, learning to drum and play Slahal (Indian Bone game), and outings that bring parents and children together in a fun atmosphere.

The project has been successful from the beginning and teachers report that the absentee rate has dropped dramatically since the project's inception. Tremendous support has been received from the community and Chief and Council. To date, the success of the project has been communicated through community newsletters and a yearly report to the funding agencies. Throughout the term of the project, pictures of the community at work and play have been displayed in order to encourage and support people in their efforts towards independence and community participation. Successes are communicated to various local committees and ideas are always shared with other communities. There are currently plans to include a page on the Tsawwassen First Nation website that demonstrates and shares with the community at large the success and pride being taken in this project.

The total cost of the project has been about $30,000. NCBR funding for the project is supplemented by funding from Health Canada under the Brighter Futures and Pre-Natal Programs.

Support to Parents

No project of this type was presented.

Home-to-Work Transition

Presenter: Mi' kmaq, Listuguj, QC
Project: School-to-Work: A Holistic Approach

The intent of the project was to reduce poverty among families and encourage self-sufficiency by encouraging participants to finish school and continue their education. This is the second year of this project, which has expanded from six participants last year, of whom two have gone on to college and one gained full-time employment, to ten participants this year, representing ten families and approximately 22 children.

There are two different phases of the School-to-Work project: Phase I consists of a Job Readiness Program and Phase II is School-to-Work, whereby participants are given job placements in their field of interest.

The Job Readiness Program' s objective is to address critical workplace issues by completing an assessment that determines individual development needs and by assisting the participant in personal and professional development. Training consists of orientation (learning about NCB and the Listuguj Mi' kmaq Development Centre); workplace skills such as computer skills, time management, communication, and working in teams; and technical training such as first aid/CPR and keyboarding. Participants are also prepared to take the General Education Diploma test. Participants have the option of continuing adult education once this program is completed.

The School-to-Work phase takes a holistic approach that provides a mentored work experience in a self-expressed interest area. The Listuguj Mi' kmaq Development Centre (LMDC), a local First Nation human resource commission, provides monitoring and logistical support to all the participants and employer sponsors. This contributes significantly to the success of the program. Attendance at all the workshops and on-site work placements is considered to be very important and has averaged 92.9% during the course of the project. LMDC emphasizes client feedback and individual monitoring of their progress.

This program is widely promoted in the community and through all the LMDC' s programming. There is a high level of interest in the project and many community members have asked to participate in it.

Funding in the amount of $138,000 from the NCBR initiative has been supplemented by contributions from LMDC, Centre Emploi Quebec (Local employment centre), and Income Assistance Transfer of Employability.

Cultural Enrichment

Presenter: Liard First Nation, YK
Project: Summer Youth Program

The 2004 project focussed on the following summer activities: swimming trips, hunting, fishing, a traditional parenting workshop, two weeks of on-land activities (camping), sewing and crafts, identifying and gathering traditional medicines and berries, and Kaska language lessons. Including parents, children and youth, approximately 150 participants were served.

The project was judged to be a success based on the number of participants at each activity and the many verbal requests from parents, youth, and elders to do more on-land camps. Information on this project was shared with the community and with INAC and other funding agencies through written reports. Funding partnerships were established with the Work Opportunity Program, Aboriginal Labour Force Alliance, and Kaska Tribal Council; the NCBR contribution was $35,000.

le Centre de développement Mi'kmaq Listuguj, CDML); les compétences en milieu de travail, par exemple connaissance de l'informatique, gestion du temps, communication et travail en équipe; la formation technique, telle que les premiers soins et la réanimation cardiorespiratoire, de même que la saisie au clavier. Les participants se sont, en outre, préparés à passer le test d'évaluation en éducation générale (GED). Une fois ce programme terminé, les participants peuvent, s'ils le désirent, poursuivre les cours d'éducation des adultes.

La phase de Transition domicile-travail se fait selon une approche holistique qui propose une expérience de travail encadrée dans un secteur d'intérêt exprimé par le participant. Le Centre de développement Mi'kmaq Listuguj (CDML), une commission locale des ressources humaines des Premières nations, offre surveillance et soutien logistique à tous les participants et aux parrains de l'employeur. Cela contribue grandement au succès de ce programme. L'assiduité aux ateliers et sur les chantiers des participants placés est très importante, et le taux d'assiduité a atteint durant le projet les 92,9 pour cent. Le CDML met l'accent sur les commentaires des clients et sur le contrôle individuel de leur progrès.

On fait largement connaître ce programme au sein de la collectivité et par le biais des projets du CDML. Celui-ci suscite l'intérêt et nombreux sont les membres de la collectivité qui ont demandé à y participer.

Le financement de 138 000 $ versé dans le cadre de l'initiative de RPNE a été complété par la contribution du CDML, celle du Centre Emploi Québec (centre d'emploi local) et celle de l'Aide au transfert à l'employabilité.

Enrichissement culturel :

Nation qui a présenté le projet : Première nation Liard, Yukon
Projet : Programme d'été jeunesse

Le projet 2004 était axé sur les activités estivales suivantes : voyages-natation, chasse, pêche, atelier de formation sur le rôle de parent, deux semaines d'activités en plein air (camping), couture et artisanat, connaissance des remèdes traditionnels, des baies et leur cueillette, cours de langue Kaska. En comptant les parents, les enfants et les adolescents, environ 150 personnes ont participé à ce projet.

Le projet a été jugé comme étant une réussite, si l'on se fie au nombre de personnes qui ont participé à chaque activité et au nombre de demandes verbales émises par les parents, les adolescents et les aînés, suggérant que soient organisés d'autres camps de plein air. On a partagé avec la collectivité, avec AINC et avec d'autres agences de financement l'information se rapportant à ce projet en rédigeant des rapports à ce sujet. Des partenariats de financement ont été établis avec le Programme assistance-travail, l'Aboriginal Labour Force Alliance et le Conseil tribal Kaska; la contribution du RPNE a été de 35 000 $.

La cuisine communautaire est tenue par un personnel bénévole qui se réunit pour discuter de la planification du menu et achète les ingrédients à bon prix. À l'été 2005, les membres de la cuisine communautaire ont organisé plusieurs cueillettes de fraises, de bleuets, etc. Après un pique-nique, ils ont rejoint leur cuisine pour confectionner tartes et confitures avec les fruits cueillis. Les activités culturelles comprennent les arts, l'artisanat, l'apprentissage du tambour et le jeu de Slahal (jeux d'os amérindien), et les sorties qui rassemblent parents et enfants pour partager une atmosphère joyeuse.

Ce projet est une réussite depuis sa création, et le taux de rapports d'absences rédigés par les professeurs a, depuis, chuté considérablement. La collectivité et le chef et le conseil ont apporté un appui remarquable à cette initiative. Jusqu'à présent, le succès du projet a été communiqué à travers le bulletin communautaire et le rapport annuel des agences de financement. Pendant toute la durée du projet, on a exposé des photos de la collectivité au travail comme au jeu pour encourager les gens dans leurs efforts vers l'indépendance et la participation communautaire. Les succès sont communiqués aux comités locaux et les idées sont toujours partagées avec les autres collectivités. On prévoit actuellement l'insertion dans le site Web de la Première nation Tsawwassen d'une page témoignant du succès de ce projet et de la fierté de ses participants, et ce, afin de pouvoir partager cette expérience avec toutes les collectivités.

Le coût total de notre projet est d'environ 30 000 $. Le financement de ce projet fourni par le biais du RPNE est suppléé par le financement accordé par Santé Canada dans le cadre du programme Un avenir meilleur et du programme prénatal.

Aide aux parents

Aucun projet de cette catégorie n'a été présenté.

Transition domicile-travail

Nation qui a présenté le projet : Première nation mi'kmaq Listuguj, Québec
Projet : Passage de l'école au marché du travail : Une approche holistique

Le but du projet était de réduire la pauvreté au sein des familles et de favoriser l'autosuffisance en encourageant les participants à terminer l'école et à poursuivre leurs études. Nous en sommes à la deuxième année de ce programme, qui s'est développé pour passer de six participants qu'il comptait l'année dernière, dont deux sont partis au collège et un a obtenu un emploi à temps plein, à dix participants cette année, ce qui représente dix familles et environ 22 enfants.

Le programme Transition domicile-travail est composé de deux phases différentes : la phase I, qui consiste en un Programme préparatoire à l'emploi, et la phase II, qui est le Programme de Transition domicile-travail, dans le cadre duquel les participants sont placés dans le secteur qui les intéresse.

L'objectif du Programme préparatoire à l'emploi est de s'attaquer aux questions critiques liées au milieu de travail en procédant à l'évaluation des besoins en matière de développement personnel et en aidant les participants à son développement personnel et professionnel. La formation consiste en l'orientation (apprendre ce que sont la PNE et

National Child Benefit Reinvestment Initiative (NCBR)
Annual Report
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. 1 What is the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Initiative?

A. The National Child Benefit is a federal/provincial/territorial initiative. It has three objectives:

- to help prevent and reduce child poverty;
- to promote workforce participation by ensuring that low-income families with children will always be better off as a result of parents working; and
- to reduce overlap and duplication by simplifying governments' administration of benefits for children

Q. 2 How does the reinvestment work given the multiple sources of funding as well as the specific roles of federal, provincial/territorial and First Nations governments?

A. The federal government provides benefits directly to low-income families with children through the NCB Supplement component of the Canada Child Tax Benefit. Provinces and territories have the flexibility to adjust social assistance payments by an amount equivalent to the NCB Supplement. First Nations follow the approach of the relevant province or territory. Provinces, territories and First Nations use those savings to provide programs and services to low-income families with children in their communities.

Q. 3 What were the key findings in the 2005 annual report?

A. First Nations reinvestments in programs and services for low-income parents and their children amounted to more than $55 million in 2004-2005; since the inception of NCBR in 1998-1999, First Nations have reinvested over $355 million in activities directed to overcoming poverty in their communities. The number of families and children who benefited from these programs and services in 2004-2005 were approximately 160,000 and 360,000 respectively (because some families and children received more than one community service, the numbers of beneficiaries have been double counted).

Q. 4 What progress has been made since the NCBR was initiated?

A. NCBR funds many services that would otherwise not be available to low-income parents and children. The services support fuller participation in economic, social, and cultural activities. The flexible nature of NCBR allows First Nations to identify and respond to their own priorities and needs in addressing child poverty. The initiative reinforces the thrust of First Nation organizations and the Government of Canada to develop self-governing, self-determining, and self-reliant First Nations. Creating and managing NCBR projects enables local officials and administrators to acquire transferable knowledge and skills. A sense of pride and individual self-esteem has been fostered by activities that raise awareness of community social, economic, and cultural traditions and values.

Q. 6 Where can I find more information?

A. More information about the National Child Benefit Reinvestment Initiative, including a backgrounder, National Standards and Guidelines manual, and Success Stories can be found on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Website: www.ainc-inac.gc.ca